I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. I am writing to you on behalf of the Maryland Society for Educational Technology (MSET), a state-wide organization of educators who are committed to advancing excellence in learning, teaching, and leading through the innovative and effective uses of technology. MSET provides leadership and advocacy to support ideas and initiatives in advancing innovation in education in Maryland.

The e-Rate has been of great importance to Maryland schools and libraries as we have been able to greatly expand our access for students and teachers to include many online resources, to communicate and collaborate, and to develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career readiness.

However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept up with bandwidth needs in Maryland schools and libraries. Although Maryland did receive an important connectivity grant to build the One Maryland Broadband Network, connectivity to individual schools at all levels is still an important need for most Maryland students and teachers. One Maryland Broadband Network connects more than 1,066 community anchor institutions, however, to really make a difference for our students, broadband access directly to all Maryland schools is greatly needed.

Since E-Rate funding levels have not provided all of the funding needed for current and future bandwidth needs to all of our schools, I urge you to raise the funding level to at least $5 billion per year, which is close to the average request level for each of the past two years.

As a Maryland educator, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the school curriculum is a pre-requisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high speed broadband is key for modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools throughout Maryland and the country.

In Maryland, we are using digital learning to provide rich library resources to all students and teachers, to provide access to communication tools, to administer online assessments, and to collect and analyze data to make better instructional decisions. We have also created the Maryland Virtual School (MVS) that offers online courses for high school credit in collaboration with local education agencies.

The E-Rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing Internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle applications from schools and libraries totaled more than $5 billion, more than double the available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least $5 billion to meet this demand. All students need access to high speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.